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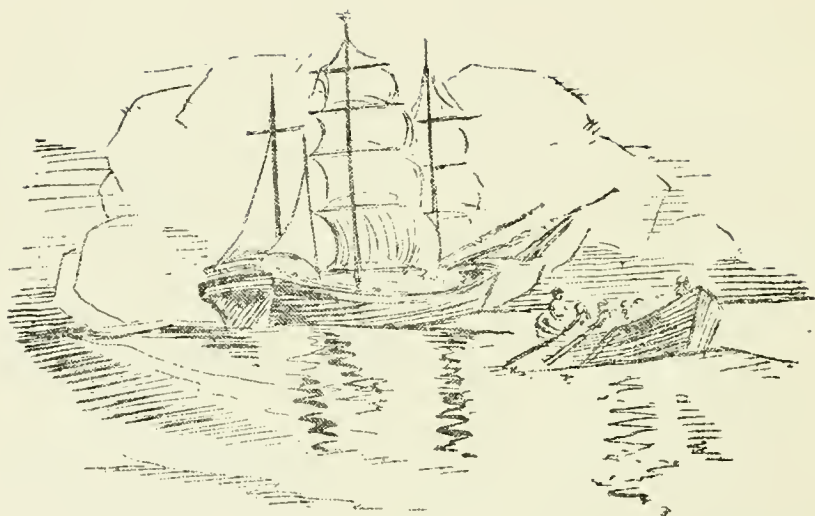
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# A GENEALOGY OF SIX GENERATIONS OF GEMMILLS IN AMERICA<sup>c</sup>

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WITH NOTES ON THEIR SCOTTISH ANCESTRY

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By WILLIAM NELSON GEMMILL  
Judge of the Municipal Court of Chicago



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William Nelson Gurnill

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## CHAPTER I

# THE GEMMILL'S AND THEIR KIN

There are times when we would know the sources of the streams which flow through our veins to generations yet unborn. It is to satisfy this desire that this booklet is written.

The Gemmills have been a simple folk. They have engaged in tilling the soil, and in the humbler tasks of the village tradesman. A few, from the earliest days, achieved distinction as martyrs, soldiers, preachers and scholars.

There were Gemmills in England before the days of William The Conqueror, and some of them fought against this Norman's cruel invasion of Albion.

There were Gemmills who, wearing the accouterments of the Scotch yeomanry, fought with Robert Bruce at Bannockburn.

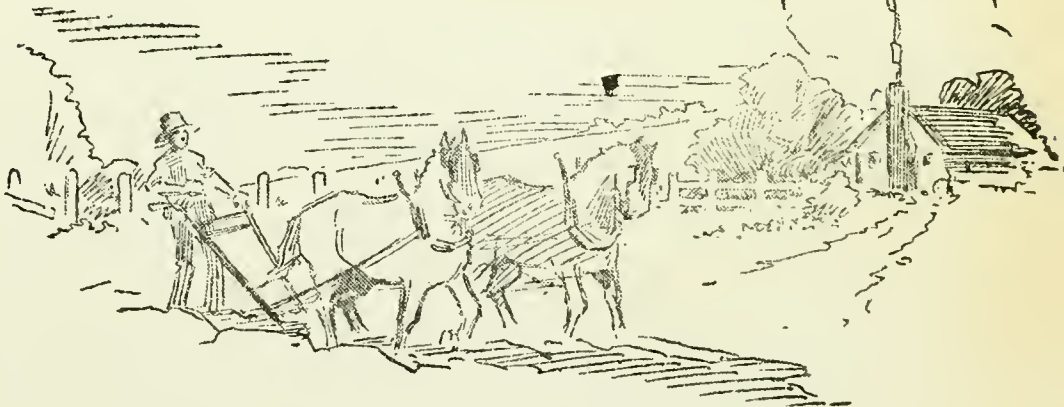
There were Gemmills who marched and prayed and fought with Cromwell at Marston Moor.

There were Gemmills in the new world, who tramped with Braddock through the wilderness to Ft. Duquesne, and shared his unhappy fate.

There were Gemmills with Wolf, on the Plains of Abraham and with the Minute Men at Concord and Lexington.

There were Gemmills with Green at Yorktown, and Brown at Lundys Lane.

There were Gemmills with Grant at Shiloh and with Meade at Gettysburg.



And in this last and greatest war, there were Gemmills whose heroic deeds at Gallopoli and the Dardenelles, will live as long as courage lasts.

There were Gemmills at the Marne and on the Somme, and some of these noble fellows now lie buried there with comrades. They died that the liberties we love, and bought with so much blood, might not perish from the earth.

There are Gemmills fighting in Flanders today, not more for King and Country, than for America and all her cherished institutions.

Nor did their glory shine alone upon the battlefield, for there were Gemmills burned at the stake, for conscience sake and there were Gemmills who preached the unsearchable riches of God, when to do so meant torture and death.



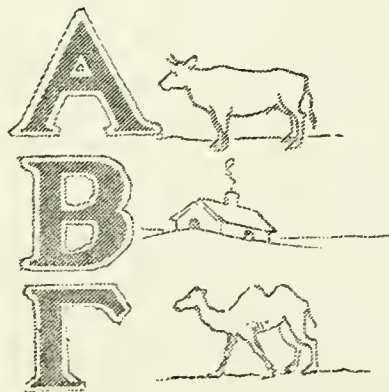
## CHAPTER II

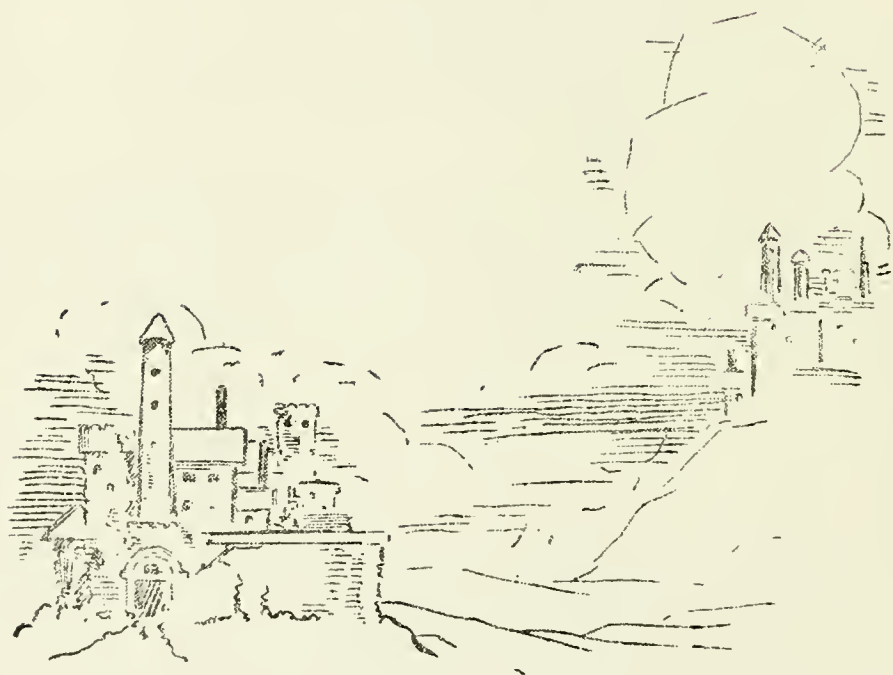
# THE NAME GEMMILL

*Freeman, the historian, says that the name Gemmill is of Danish origin—and means “ancient.”*

It is quite certain that the names Gemmill and Campbell had the same origin. In the early days men were named after familiar objects or trades, so we have Lyons and Foxes, Smiths and Taylors, Blacks and Whites. All the letters of both the Hebrew and Greek alphabets were the names of familiar objects. The first letter of the Greek alphabet is “alpha” and of the Hebrew “aleph,” both mean “ox.” The second letter of the Greek alphabet is “beta” and of the Hebrew “beth,” both mean “house.” The third letter of the Greek alphabet is “gamma” and of the Hebrew “gimel,” both mean “camel.”

It is fair to assume that the names of Gemmill and Campbell had the same origin, and this was far back at the beginnings of Greek and Hebrew literature. In the early records we find the name appearing as Gimel, Gemil, Gamel, Gemmills, Gemmill and Gemmell.







### CHAPTER III

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE GEMMILLS

In the eleventh century, John Gemel, a son of Orm, was an officer in King Harold's army and was slain by Tostig, a brother of the king. The records show that at about the same time a certain John Gimel restored the old church of Kirkdale, which had been destroyed by the invaders. For this he was made a Thane by the King.

In the Domesday Book, which was written by William the Conqueror in 1080, frequent mention is made of the Gemmills, one of whom married Etheldrell, daughter of Alfred of Northumberland.

After the Norman Conquest the estates of all those who had opposed the invaders were confiscated and given to the friends of the king. The Gemmills who were of this number, were driven northward into Scotland and their lands given to Hugh Fitz Baldrick. One branch of the Gemmill family, at one time, fled to Ireland. In 1293, Henry Gemmill appeared in Ireland as attorney of record for William DeSpineto. Those who were driven northward settled in Ayrshire in the towns of Fenwick and Irvine, a few miles from Glasgow.

According to an ancient law, the lands owned by the father

fell to his eldest son. Sometimes additional lands were bought beyond the original holdings, and these were often willed to the other sons. In this way families were kept together for generation after generation.

In 1570, the registers show that the Gemmills owned all the land of Raith, Raithmuir, Dalsraith, Grassyards, Daraelay, Longdykes, Black Brier, Cullaire, Clonfin, Blackwood, Hillhouse, Bankdyke, Monkland and Weardlow, all situated in what was known as the Fenwick district. This included about 3,321 acres, most of it good land.

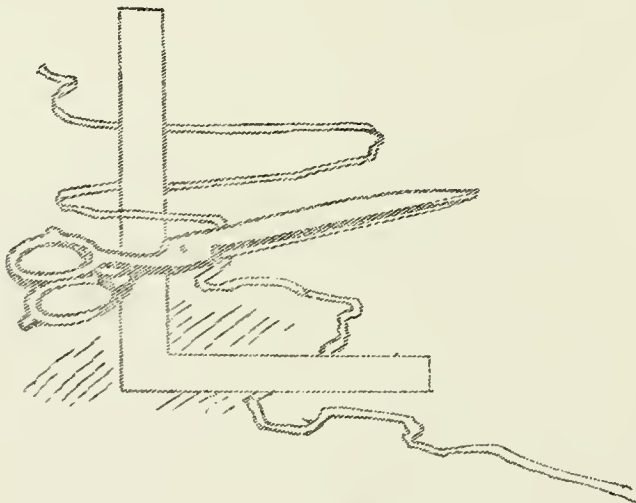
It is certain that all the Gemmills that settled in this neighborhood were related, for their names frequently appear in each other's wills as witnesses. About four hundred acres of the land was described in the wills as nine shilling four pence land. The other was called five pound land. This was the valuation put on it by the King of Scotland for purposes of taxation. This Raithmuir land was only subdivided twice in two centuries.

In 1473, King Edward IV issued a commission to Richard Gamel to sail the Good Ship LeMary of Scotland in the King's dominions.

In 1474, Dick Gamel was a royal court draper to the King of Scotland.

In the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer is the following item:

Fra Dick Gammil  $\frac{1}{2}$  elne of satyne to lyne the cuffs of the sleffs of a jacket for the king, and V elne of velvous for a gounne to my lady £12/10.



## CHAPTER IV

# THE EARLY HOME OF THE GEMMILLS

The earliest record of the Gemmills in Scotland is found in the County of Ayr. Two branches of the family lived here from a very early day—the oldest branch at Templehouse in the parish of Dunlop—the other at Fenwick in the parish of Kilmarnock—most of the Gemmills in the United States seem to have come from the Fenwick stock.

The little town of Fenwick is but a few miles from Irvine—and lies between Irvine and Glasgow—both are near Kilmarnock. Here the Druids once worshipped and offered sacrifices.

In 1593, the village by a decree of Parliament was swallowed up in the parish of Kilmarnock. The patronage of the church was granted to the Earl of Kilmarnock. This act met with great opposition and frequent fighting between the King's soldiers and the inhabitants. Kilmarnock was named from Saint Marnock, one of the earliest of the Presbyterian saints. The parish included 8,340 acres of land. Under the Parliamentary decree the people of the parish were compelled to pay as tithes to the monks



and ecclesiastics annually: 347 Bolls and 2 firlots of meal, two firlots of beer and L-33/6 in money.

The war that had waged in Europe for several centuries against the domination of the Roman Church culminated in a defeat for the church, but in its stead came the established Church of England. This was dominated wholly by the King and was no less objectionable to the peasantry of Scotland than had been the Roman Church. Scotland was always the center of the fight against the established church. The Presbyterians especially resisted every effort of the kings of England to force the church upon Scotland. This led to the organization of the Covenanters. Every member of the church entered into a solemn covenant to resist all the efforts of the kings to force a state religion upon him, and took a solemn oath to follow the rule and teaching of the Presbyterian Church. It was through these perilous times that the records show many activities of the Gemmills.

In 1547, out of 300 parishioners of Kilmarnock who voted for the election of a priest, a large number of them were Gemmills. Each one voting must have been the head of a family. At a little later time there is a record of the refusal of residents of Kilmarnock to sell corn and straw to the army. For this a bloody battle was fought at Airmoss in which John Gemmill and several others were killed. They were buried in Willwood Valley, July 20, 1680. There is an old monument erected at Airmoss over the bodies of these men. It bears the following inscription:

These men did search through moor and moss  
To find out all that had no pass;  
These faithful witnesses were found  
And murdered there upon the ground.  
Their bodies in this gound do lie;  
Their blood for vengeance yet doth cry;  
They may a standing witness be for Presbytry  
Against prelacy.

In 1685, Peter Gemmill, a young man about twenty-one years old, was shot at Fenwick. He and several other staunch Covenanters seeing the approach of the King's dragoons for the



purpose of forcing obedience to the royal church, boldly set forth to meet them, and all were killed. On a small slab at Fenwick is this inscription:

“Here lies the corpse of Peter Gemmill, who was shot to death by Nisbet and his party in 1685 for bearing his faithful testimony to the cause of Christ. Age 21 years.

“This man like Anchorite of old,  
For conscience sake was thrust from home and hold.  
Blood-thirsty red coats cut his prayer short,  
And even his dying groans were made their sport.  
Ah, Scotland breech of solemn vows repent,  
Or blood thy crimes will be thy punishment.”

This same Peter Gemmill has a place in “The Book of Martyrs,” and is mentioned in the volume called “The Cloud of Witnesses.” He had a brother David who was driven into exile to the Barbadoes and later returned to America. The later book refers to a John Gemmill of Fenwick, who while attending a prayer meeting was set upon by a band of troopers. Rushing from the church he seized the bayonet of a soldier and thrust him through; then made good his escape. It also contains an account of Ralph Gemmill, who was burned at the stake because he refused to yield to the demands of the church. Irvine, which was a part of the parish of Kilmarnock, is on the Firth of Clyde. It was the home of Robert Burns. It was also the home of William and Zachariah Gemmill, the first of whom was the ancient father of the Gemmills in York County, Pa. These Gemmills were undoubtedly of the same stock that originally settled in Fenwick. Robert Bruce also came from this parish. Here he enlisted an army, with which he drove back the English invader. At least one Gemmill was among those who fought with him at Bannockburn.

Later, when Charles I of England determined to force the established church upon Scotland, most of the inhabitants of Kilmarnock joined hands with Cromwell in the battle at Marston Moor, which resulted in the complete overthrow of the King.

The records show that for six generations beginning in the fourteenth century the eldest son of the parent family was called John Gemmill. The first John suffered martyrdom June 1, 1679,

at the hands of Claverhouse whose bloody acts against the Covenanters terrorized the whole of Scotland. The sixth John was born in Kilmarnock in about 1774 and emigrated to Philadelphia in 1781. The next year he entered the University of Pennsylvania where he afterwards graduated and became an instructor. He married Sarah Knox in Philadelphia. She was the widow of Colonel Robert Knox of the Continental Army and was celebrated for her great beauty. She died one year after her marriage. John Gemmill then studied theology and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1790. He preached in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was so popular that he was offered one of the best Congregational pulpits in New England at New Haven. This he accepted. A little later he was offered the Chair of Divinity in Yale College by President Dwight, but declined the Honor. In October, 1803, he married his second cousin Rebecca Irwin. While staying with his brother in Huntington County, Pennsylvania, he saw Rebecca and thought she was very comely, and advised his brother Zachariah to marry her. His brother replied: "Marry her yourself." This he did. He died in Chester County in 1814, leaving four children,—John, Liza, Caroline and Amelia. He wrote very much during his lifetime, and for a short time was a member of the State Senate of Pennsylvania. Inscribed on his tombstone is the following:

"Sacred to the memory of Rev. John Gemmill, who departed this life September 14, 1814. His eminent ability as a teacher of the religion of Christ, his social virtues, his private worth and his superior attainments in science, are enshrined in the fond memory of his bereaved admirers. His patriotic and public service are recorded in the annals of his country."

A cousin of this John, also named John, left Kilmarnock in 1750 and settled in Carlyle, Pennsylvania. He was a watchmaker and made a large grandfather's clock, which remained in the family through many generations.



His son John, who was born in 1804, settled in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, and bought a farm near Lewiston, which he called Kilmarnock. This son also had an eldest son John, who was born on the Kilmarnock farm. He had several children whom he named, Thomas, Zachariah, Elizabeth, Marian and Ann.

The will of the sixth John read in part as follows:

“June 18, 1770.

Now, my dear children, you have heard in my last will what the Lord has blessed me with and I have a far more important matter to lay before you, which lies nearer my heart than all the temporal treasurer of ten thousand worlds, and that concerns your immortal souls. It was of God's free grace that I received you and to Him I recommend you again. Let none of you turn to the ways of sin and service of the Devil. Beware of lying and swearing; be careful how you spend your Sabbaths and beware of the sin of disobedience to your mother and your father or any of your superiors. Beware of pride, passion and obscene discourse. And now, my dear children, as I am within view of death, my last word to you is that you will observe to choose good company and carefully shun bad company, and know that the Lord may grant each of you the shining of His face and leave on you the light of His countenance and finally receive you into everlasting felicity.

JOHN GEMMILL.”

One of the earlier John Gemmills of Raithmuir died in 1578. In his will he bequeathed that his fourth son Peter should inherit the land. He was to care for his sisters Margaret and Marian and to pay his younger brother Alexander one hundred marks as Bairns part. He gave his sword to his brother Alexander, and this was handed from father to son through many generations. Tradition has it that the elder John Gemmill wielded the sword at the battle of Langside which was fought within fifteen miles of the Raithmuir farm. The older son of this Peter Gemmill was John, whose contract of marriage was recorded in 1614 in the register of deeds in Edinburgh. In the contract Peter Gemmill agreed to transfer to his son and his wife and their children

all of their 9/4 land in Raithmuir. John Gemmill, the son, died in 1622, and in his will he named his eldest son John Gemmill as sole heir to his 4 penny land in Raithmuir, and his "richt and kyndness of his 20 shilling land to Peter and Jonet, his bairns, tak of the equal half."

There was a James Gemmill who was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, in 1810, and moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he followed the tailoring trade. He had a son born in 1840, who was a corporal during the Civil War, and a thirty-second degree Mason.

The following is an interesting page from the commissariat of Glasgow, showing a register of lands in that district during a certain period:

Alexander Gemmill, burgess of Glasgow, October 11, 1725.

Andrew Gemmill, son of John Gemmill in confir, June 1, 1615.

Andrew Gemmill, parish of Kilmarnock, July 13, 1630.

Anabelle, sponse to James Gemmill, April 24, 1672.

Bessie Gemmill, spouse to Abe, parish of Kilmarnock, September 6, 1633.

David Gemmill, preacher of God's religion at the Kirk of Mearn at Mirns, October 8, 1651.

David Gemmill, bonnet-maker in Kilmarnock, January 17, 1765.

Elson Gemmill, spouse to Hugh Brown, September 8, 1681.

David Gemmill, sailor in Irving, December 16, 1734.

George Gemmill, burgess of Glasgow, September, 1684.

James Gemmill, elder in Blackwood parish of Kilmarnock, March 11, 1616.

James Gemmill, burgess of Irving, October 25, 1674.

James Gemmill, merchant in Glasgow, April 5, 1721.

James Gemmill, land laborer, in Langside, Sept., 1747.

Jonet relict to Archibald Gemmill.

John Gemmill, cutter in Kilmarnock.

Jonet spouse to Thomas Gemmill.

Jonet, lawful daughter of Anrew Gemmill.

Katherine Gemmill, servitor to Jonet Gemmill.

Margaret Gemmill, spouse to Henry Smith.



Margaret Gemmill, relict to James Gemmill.

Marion spouse to Matthew.

Peter Gemmill, balie of Glasgow.

Robert Gemmill, elder in Fymick.

Thomas Gemmill, weaver in Glasgow.

William Gemmil, shipmaster in Irving.

William Gemmill, tailor in Blith.

Zachariah Gemmill, writer in Irving.

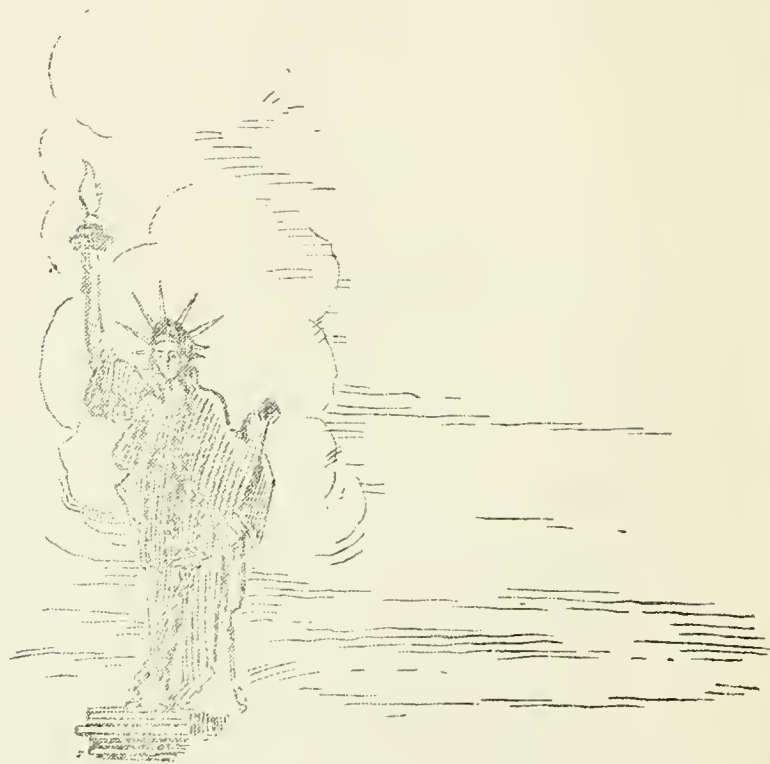
James Gemmill, tobacconist in Glasgow.

The complete list contains the names of over three hundred Gemmills.

Most of the Gemmills who came to America as early settlers, found their homes in York County, Pennsylvania, but some of them located in Maryland, others in Connecticut, some in Massachusetts, and some in New Hampshire. There is an old cemetery in York County, Pennsylvania, wherein the Gemmills of several generations were buried. It is known as Downing's Graveyard. Some of the markers in this cemetery show that Gemmills were buried here one hundred and twenty-six years ago. This burying ground, however, was abandoned long ago and most of the markers had, until recently, fallen upon the unkept graves. About two years ago, several members of the Gemmill family, led by John M. Gemmill of Laurel, York County, Pennsylvania, gathered up the broken markers and removed them to a chartered cemetery not far away. Among the markers thus fallen was one over the grave of Hannah Gemmill, my grandmother and the first wife of James Gemmill. She died in 1837.

In this book I have not attempted to trace our family, by direct line through several generations in Scotland, but have aimed only to show a connection between the Gemmills of Scotland and our family in America. To this end I have begun with William Gemmill who was born in Irvine, and was the father of six generations in America.





## SIX GENERATIONS OF GEMMILLS IN AMERICA

### WILLIAM and JANNETT.

WILLIAM GEMMILL was born in Irvine, Scotland, in 1722. He emigrated to America and settled in East Hopewell Township, York County, Pennsylvania, in 1745. His wife was Jannett Gemmill, whom he married in Scotland. He served as Lieutenant in the French and Indian War, and as a Major in the War of the Revolution. He was both a farmer and a merchant, and for several years was County Commissioner of York County, Pennsylvania, during which time he assisted in building the first county jail.

Several children were born to this marriage. They were: John, David, Ann, Margaret, William, James and Robert.

He had a brother Zachariah Gemmill, who was also born in Irvine, Scotland, in 1730. This Zachariah Gemmill was a writer (lawyer) and achieved distinction in his day. It is probable that the ancestral Scottish home of William and Zachariah was on a narrow strip of sandy ground near the shores of Irvine, called Bogside. This land is now used for a golf course.



In the Scottish Antiquary, Vol. III, 1893, there appears this entry:

“1769, January 27, William Gemmill of Bogside, merchant in London, served heir-general to his grandfather Zachariah Gemmill, writer in Irvine.”

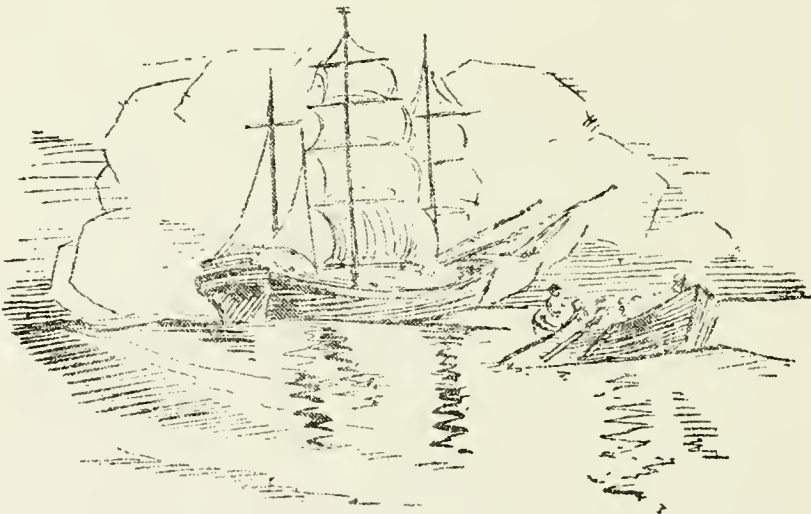
Zachariah had a son who became widely known as Captain Hugh Gemmill. He was a famous, roving sea captain, and at one time during our troubles with England, his vessel was seized and held on the charge of carrying contraband goods. At the close of the war he filed a claim for damages against England, and this was later settled by an award being made to him. He died November 29, 1822, and is buried in New Castle County, Delaware. On his grave is the following inscription:

“Graveyard of Christiana Presbyterian Church, founded 1738. Captain Hugh Gemmill died November 29, 1822, age 55 years, 11 months and 4 days.

Jane Gemmill, his wife, died August 17, 1826, age 55 years, 9 months.”

Some of the direct descendants of this Captain Hugh Gemmill live in Baltimore. Among them is Mrs. Percy G. Skirven, a daughter of James Sutton Gemmill of Kent County, Delaware, and the granddaughter of William McBride Gemmill of New Castle, Delaware.

A brother of William and Zachariah, was named John. He came to America in 1749 and settled in Boston. This John had





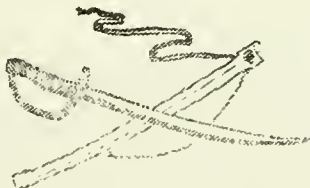
two sons, one of whom was born in Boston in 1750, and was afterwards a member of the Boston Tea Party. The other married Thankful Keys, and was a soldier in the Revolutionary War.

The youngest son of William and Jannett was born in 1763, and was always known as Major Robert Gemmill. It is probable that he served, when very young, in the Revolutionary War.

The eldest son of William and Jannett was named John, and he was my great great grandfather. William died March 2, 1789, near his original home in York County, and left a will dated December 2, 1768. This will was never probated, for the reason that two of his children, Margaret and William, died before the death of the testator, and his wife, Janet, died two weeks after the death of her husband. The will was set aside by agreement of the other heirs. The will is as follows:

"In the name of God Amen this Second Day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand and seven hundred and sixty Eight, I William Gemmill in Hope-well township, York County and province of Pennsylvania being weak and tender of body but of perfect mind and memory thanks be given unto God therefore calling unto mind the mortality of my body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to die Do make and ordain this my last Will and testament that is to say principaly and first of all I give and Recommend my soul unto the hand of the almighty God that gave it and my body I recommend to the earth to be buried in a decent Christian manner at the Descrestion of my friends nothing doubting but at the general Resurrection I shall receive the Sam againe by the mighty powr of God and touching such Worldly Estate wherewith it heath pleased God to bless me in this life I give Demise and Dispose of the same in the following manner and form.

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my well beloved



son John Gemmill the sum of twenty-five pounds pennsylvania currency to be took out of my Estate real and personal and no more.

Secondly I bequeath unto my beloved wife Gennat Gemmill one seventh part of my Estate real and personal to be equally Divided betwixt her and the rest of my unmarried Children as hereafter followeth that is to say thirdly one seventh part Equal with my wife to my well beloved Daughter margrat gammill out of my Estate Real and Personal and likewise forthley one seventh part to my well beloved son David Gammill out of my Estate Real and personal and likewise fifthly one seventh part of my Estate real and personal unto my well beloved Daughter ann gemmill sixtly one Seventh part unto my well beloved son William Gemmill of my estate real and personal Seventhly one Seventh part of my Estate real and personal unto my well beloved Son James Gemmill Eightly the seventh part of my Estate real and personal unto my well beloved son Robert Gemmill ninthly I authorse and allow that three honnast and reputibale men shall be indaferintly Chosen by the legaties or there representatives for to vallue and praise all my lands and other personall Estate and when Said plantations are vallued as above mentioned I allow my well beloved wife Gennet gemmill to have her first choice Eather in money or land for her Seventh Share tenthly I allow all when my plantations are justly vallued as above ordered that my son David Gembill Shall have his first Choise of said pantations and my son William to have the Second Choise and my son James to have the third and my son robert the forth which lands are acording to vallue to be vallued in Each ones Seventh Share as far as they are vallued by the men indifrontly to them and their heirs for Ever and If aney of my lands Remain unchosen after my four sons David William James and robert have taken there choice my Daughters margaret and ann may choice acording to there Eage.

Eliventhlie I Do Hereby nominate and apoint my well beloved wife Gennet Gemmill and my son David Gemmill to be my only Execcotors or admns of this my last will and testment hereby revoking and disannul all and every others forms etastment wills and legacises and bequithments and Executuers by me aney wise before named willed I bequithed ratifiy and confirming this and no other to be my last will and testment in Witness Whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and Seal the day and year above written

Signed sealed published and delivered in  
the presents of us who have hearunto

subscribed our names in the presence of the testator

WILLIAM GEMMILL Seal

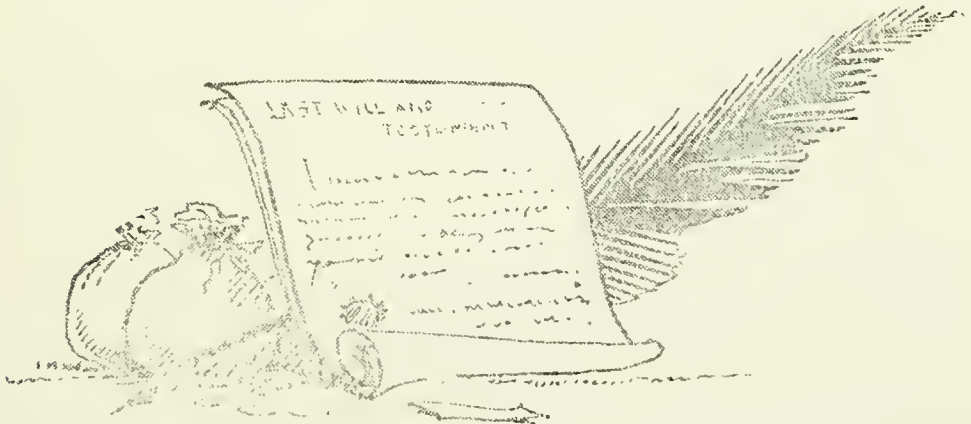
Archibald White

Edward Manifold

David Griffith"

Janet Gemmill, the wife of William, also left a Will, which was filed for probate in York County on March 25, 1889. The Will is as follows:

"IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN the tenth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven Hundred and Eighty nine I Janit Gemmill of Hopewell Township in the county of York in the State of Pennsylvania being very sick and weak in Body but of perfect mind and memory and calling to mind the mortality of my body and that it is appointed unto all men once to die Do make and publish this my last Will and Testament in maner and form following Viz first I Resign my



soul to god who gave it and my body to the Earth to be buried in a Decent and Christian manner at the Discreation of my Evecutors and as to such worldly Estate as it hath pleased God to bless me with I give and bequeath in the following manner I That is to say

Imprimes I give and bequeath to my son John Gemmill one pound lawful money of Pennsylvania.

Item I give and bequeath to my son David Gemmill the sum of one pound lawful of Pennsylvania.

Item I give and bequeath to my Daughter Ann the wife of David Weylie the like sum of one pound

Item I give and bequeath to my son James Gemmill the like sum of one pound

Item I give and bequeath to my Grand Daughter Margaret the Daughter of my son John Gemmill the sum of twenty pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania.

Item I give and bequeath to my grand son William Gemmill the son of my son John the like sum of twenty pounds

Item I give and bequeath to each of my said son Johns other children born by his first wife the sum of fifteen pounds like lawful money aforesaid

Item I give and bequeath to my grand daughter Janet Weylie the Daughter of David Weylie the sum of five pounds which several sums so willd to my grand children to be collected out of my out standing Debts as soon after my Decease as possible and to be lent out to Interst untill they are at lawfull age

Item I give and bequeath to my son Robert Gemmill all and singular the Residue of my estate.

And I Do hereby authorize constitute and appoint my trusty friend Andrew Finley and my son Robert Gemmill to be the Executors of this last will and testament and I do hereby revoke and Disanull all former will or be-





quasts mede by me and Do hereby publish and Declair  
this and no other to be my last Will and Testament wit-  
ness my hand and seal the day and year first above writ-  
ten in presence of us

Alex Turner

her

Alexan Downing

JANET X GEMMILL (Seal)  
mark

This will was filed and probated at York, March 25,  
1789."

It will be noticed how uncertain is the spelling of the names. The wife's name is spelled Gennat, Gennet, Genat, Janet, Janit and on her tombstone it is spelled Jannette, while Gemmill is spelled in as many different ways.

On the markers in the old Downings Gravevard are the following inscriptions:

In memory of William Gemmill, who departed this life Feb. 28, 1789. Aged 67 years."

"In memory of Jennette Gemmill who departed this life March 14th, 1789, A. D. Aged 64 years."



The following is part of an interesting Deed from Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, grandsons of William Penn, who at the time in question were the sole proprietors of all the land along the Delaware River in the State of Pennsylvania. The grantee is William Gammill, who was probably the son of William and Jennette Gemmill, the first of the Gemmill line in York County, Pennsylvania:

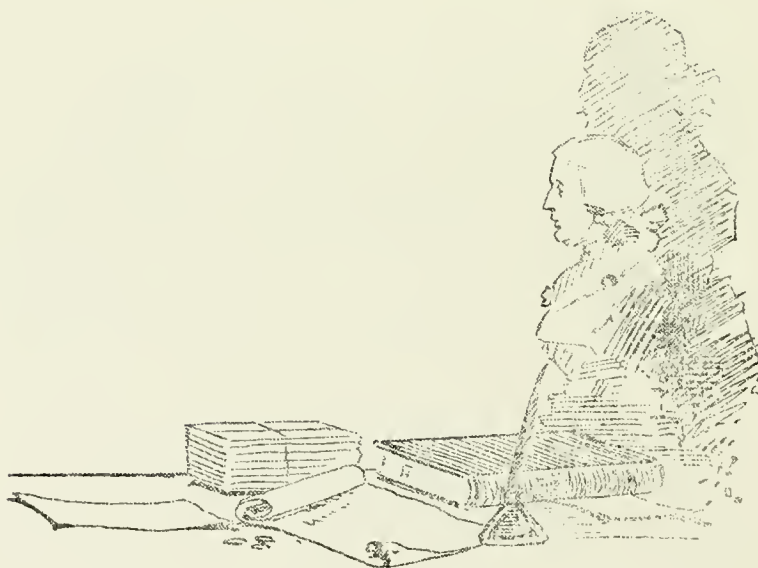
“DEED from,  
Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, Esquires,  
to

William Gamble alias Gammill.

Dated, January 27, 1767. The seventh year of the Reign of King George the Third.

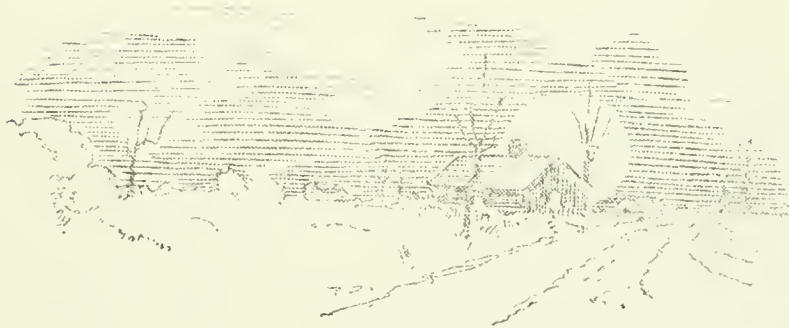
Warrant dated the 16th day of December, 1757.

THOMAS PENN AND RICHARD PENN, Esquires, True and absolute Proprietaries and Governors in Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania, and Counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, upon Delaware. To all unto whom these Presents shall come. Greeting! WHEREAS, In pursuance of a warrant dated the sixteenth day of December, 1757, there was surveyed unto William Gamble alias William Gammill a certain tract of land called Gammels Chance Situated in Shrewsbury Town-



ship, York County, Beginning at a Chestnut Three thence by Barrens and Vacant land South twenty two degrees West seventy two perches to a stone and South Seventy five degrees East Forty six perches to a marked Chestnut oak thence by Alexander Wallaces North seven degrees East fifty two perches to a Chestnut oak and South seventy five degrees East one hundred and twenty four perches to a marked black oak, thence by Thomas Curries land North thirty-six degrees thirty minutes West forty seven perches to a Hickory Tree and North fifty eight degrees East one hundred and forty nine perches to a marked white oak thence by Barrens North Forty one perches to a past and South Sixty eight degrees West Two hundred & sixty one perches to the place of beginning Containing ninety two acres and a half and allowances of six & Cent for Roads &c. As by the said Warrant and Survey remaining in the Surveyor Generals Office and from thence Certified into our Secretaries office more fully appear.

Consideration Fourteen pounds and Seven Shillings.



The following is the written consent of the heirs of certain deceased Gemmills given in 1915 to remove the markers and headstones from the old Downing Gravevard to the cemetery at Round Hill:

“KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS,

WHEREAS, William Gemmill, Jennette Gemmill, John Gemmill, his first wife Agnes and his second wife Elizabeth, and John Gemmill, have been interred at Downing's Gravevard, and there has been erected at the graves of the above named persons tombstones, slab and markers containing the following, to-wit:

William Gemmill departed this life February, 1789, age 67 years; Jennette Gemmill departed this life March, 1789, age 64 years; James Gemmill departed this life, A.D. 1788, age 37 years; and several others by the name of Gemmill, over whose graves are field stones containing initials only.

AND WHEREAS, the said tombstones, slabs and markers are liable to become broken, delapidated and destroyed if left to remain where they are now erected, at a place never visited by any of the kindred.



NOW in order to further perpetuate the memory of said deceased persons and to preserve and care for said tombstones, slabs and markers, it is deemed advisable to have said tombstones, slabs and markers removed and erected in the Round Hill Cemetery, where the same will be preserved and taken care of forever. Other slabs are to be erected at the graves of said deceased persons containing suitable lettering in lieu of the tombstones, slabs and markers removed.

We the undersigned, heirs and legal descendants of the above named persons now deceased, do hereby consent and agree that said tombstones, slabs and markers be removed from the Downing Graveyard and erected in Round Hill cemetery, and that other slabs be erected at the graves of said descedents.

It is further desired that this agreement be inscribed upon the records of the Round Hill Cemetery Association.

(Signed) JOHN McALLISTER GEMMILL."







CHAPTER VI  
JOHN  
and  
AGNES  
and  
ELIZABETH

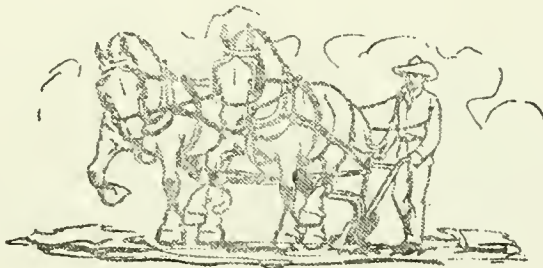
JOHN GEMMILL, the oldest son of William and Janet, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, in 1745. He first married Agnes Wallace, who bore him eight children. They were Margaret, William, James, Janet, John David, Agnes and Ann. His second wife was Elizabeth, with whom he had four children. They were Mary, Jean, Robert and Sarah. It is said that both he and his sons were very large men.

He died in 1798 and was buried in Downing Cemetery in York County. On the marker over his grave is the following inscription :

“In memory of John Gemmill, born in 1745, died in 1798.”

In that cemetery lie buried three of his brothers, David, James and Robert. The markers over their graves have the following inscriptions :

“In memory of David Gambel and Janet, his wife, who died December 25, 1839, A. M., in the eighty-seven year of her life.”



This David Gemmill (spelled Gambel) is mentioned in his father's will as "David Gammill." He was a soldier in the Revolution.

On another marker over the fourth son of William and Jennette is the following inscription:

"In memory of James Gemmill, who departed this life on July 23, 1799, at the age of thirty-seven years."

On the marker over the grave of Robert, the fifth son of William and Jennette, is the following inscription:

"In memory of Major Robert Gemmill, of East Hope-well Township, who departed this life on May 11, 1846, A. D., at the age of eighty-four years."

This Major Robert Gemmill was an officer in the War of 1812.

When John Gemmill died in 1798, he left a will, which was probated in York County, Pennsylvania, on March 5, 1798. It is as follows:

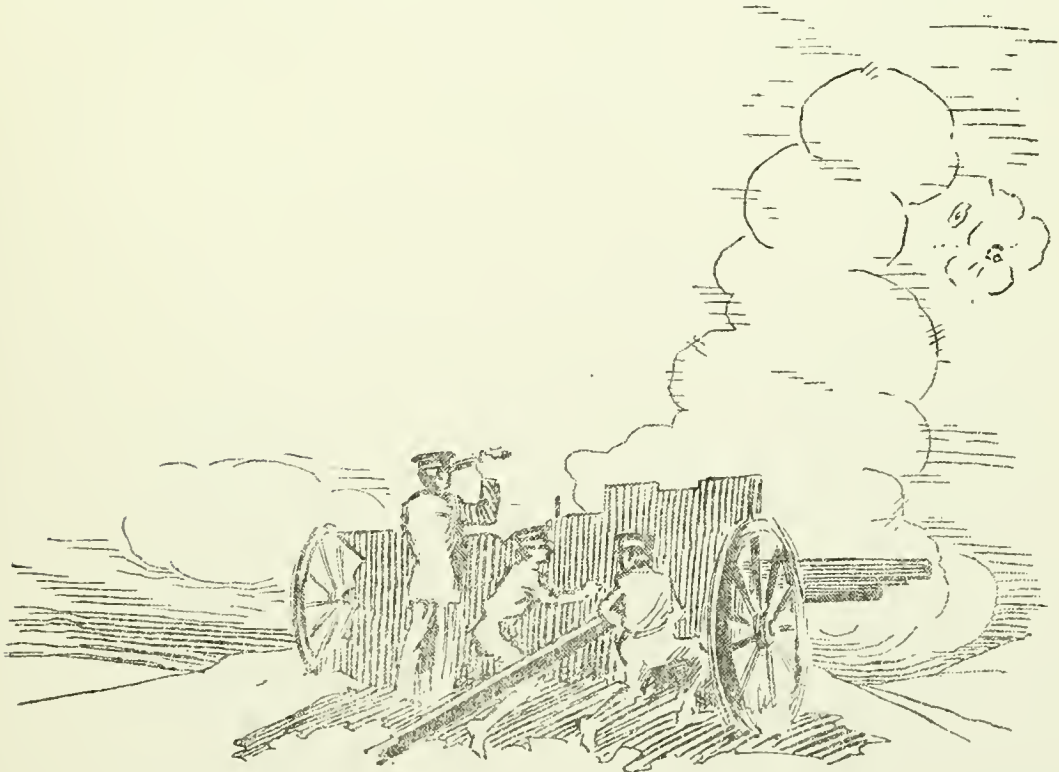
"I, John Gemmill, on 21st day of Dec. 1796, being very sick and weak of body, but of perfect mind and memory do will and bequeath my property as follows, viz, After payment of my debts, First I give and bequeath





to my beloved daughter Margaret Collins 25 lbs. in currency to be paid in one year after my decease. 2nd to my beloved son William 35 lbs. to be paid in one year after my decease. 3d to James the sum of 151 lbs. one year after my decease, to Jannet Allison 25 lbs. 1 year after my decease. Also to my beloved wife the mare; also her saddle and bridle, her choice of one of my cows, also one bed and bedding: also she is to have equal share of my estate, real and personal with the remainder of my children hereafter mentioned, that is to say—John, David, Agnes, Ann, Elizabeth, Mary Jean, Robert and Sarah, provided that she continues my widow until she assists in raising my children until they become of full age; but if she marries with any man before the children are raised, she is to move off the plantation whereon I now reside, and to have no share or part of the value of said plantation.

Moreover, it is my disire that if the colt lives that the mare is with that my wife gets after my decease it shall suck the mare until the 1st of Sept. and then be sold to



the best advantage and the price of said colt be paid to my son John. As also it is my desire that the two following tracts of land be set up to public sale after my decease and the valuation be put to the best use aforesaid, viz, a tract of land in Hopewell tw'p containing 105 acres adjoining lands of Wm. Edgar and John Manifold and others: the other tract lying in Fawn tw'p containing 40 acres adjoining lands of Joseph Mitchell and others. Also it is my desire that the personal property shall after my decease be put to public sale and sold to the best advantage, and the valuation of same be put to the use aforesaid, excepting such personal property that I allow to be reserved to carry on the farm to raise the children: viz, the largest horse, one plow and harrow and two pair of horse gears. As also it is my will and desire that the plantation that I now reside on is not to be put



to public sale until my children is all raised to full age, for it is my desire that my children aforesaid shall have the benefit of said planation; to be raised in a genteel manner and to have schooling such as my other children had that is married, if possible: and after my children are all raised to full age, it is my desire that the said plantation be put up to public sale and sold to the best advantage and the valuation thereof to be put to the use aforesaid: and also I do hereby constitute and appoint my loving wife, Elizabeth Gemmill and John Kelly my trusty friend my executors also my loving brother Robert Guardian of my minor children until they become of age: to see they have common schooling and to be taken care of according to law an dmy desire in this will.

JOHN GEMMILL.

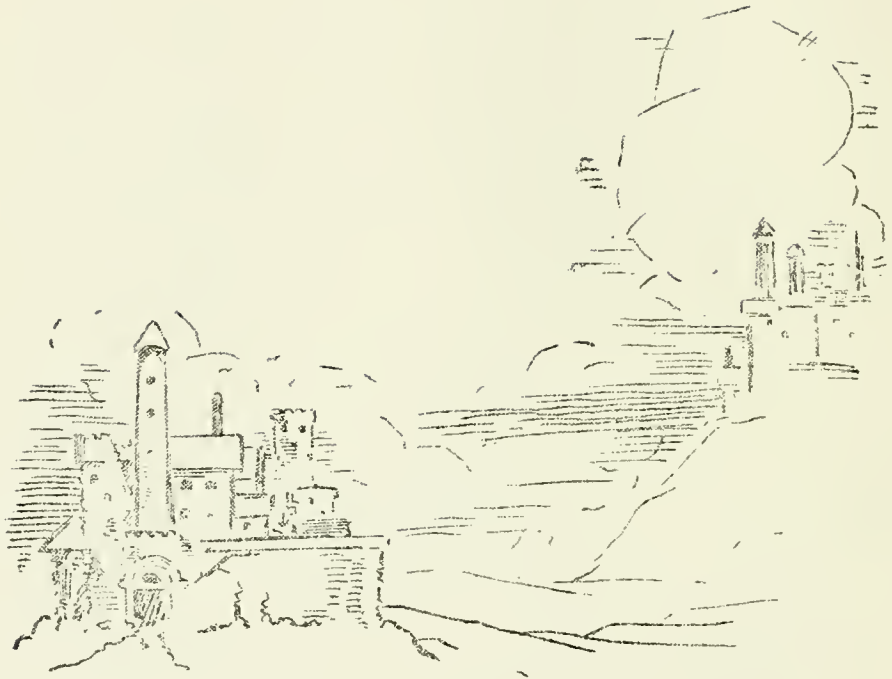
Witness—John Gordon

Jas. McCall

Hugh King

1336472

Robert Gemmill appeared and with up-lifted hand swore he heard the said John Gemmill dictate the above will to John Gordon which was correctly put in working by said Gordon and afterward duly signed.



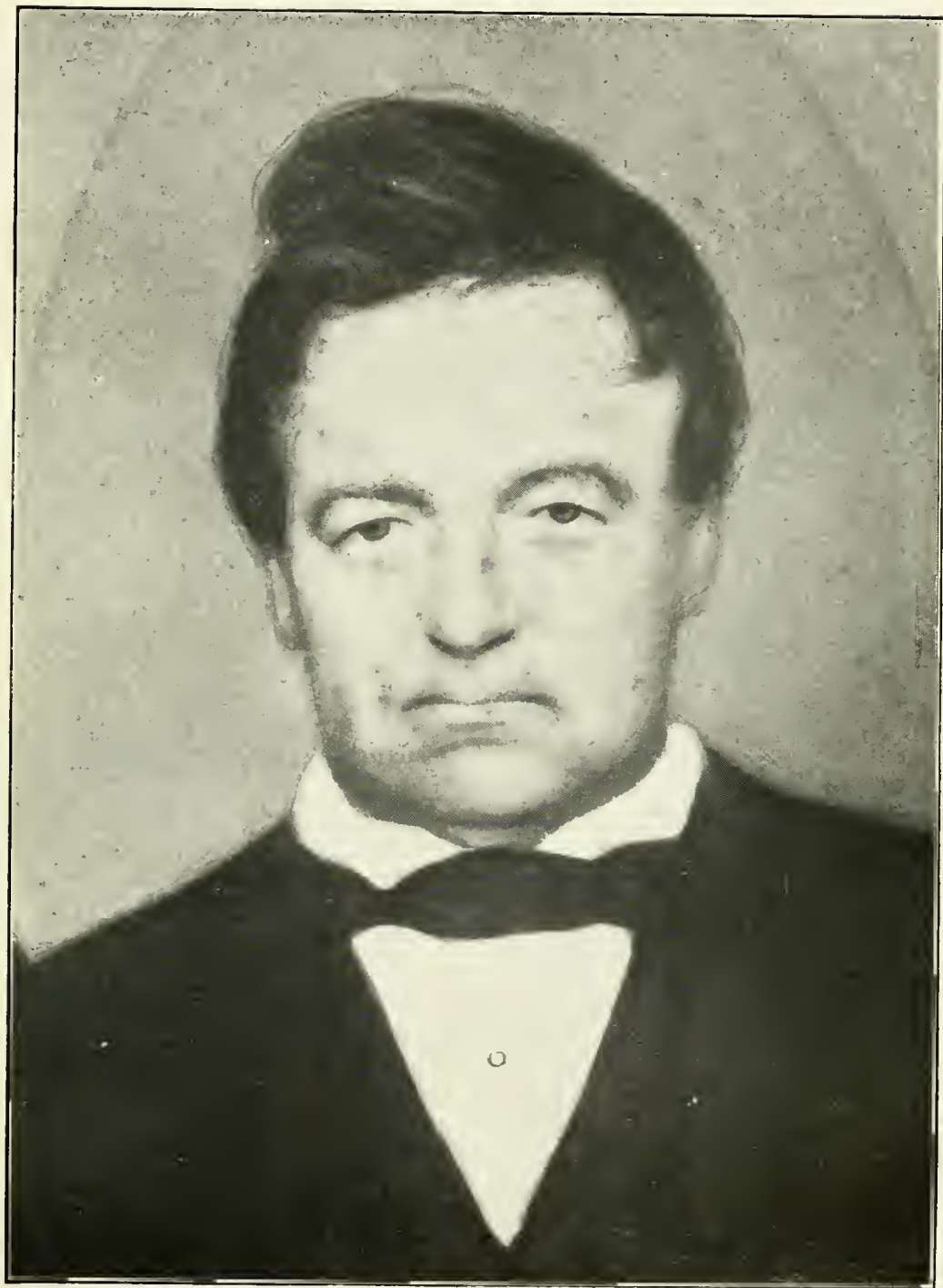
CHAPTER VII  
WILLIAM  
and  
MARTHA EDIE.

WILLIAM GEMMILL, the oldest son of John and Agnes, was my great grandfather. He was born in York County, August 31, 1771, and was married August 28, 1794, to Martha Edie, who was born August 4, 1774. To this union were born ten children. There were John, who was born July 14, 1795, and who served in the war of 1812; Mary, born 1787; William, born October 7, 1789; James, my grandfather, born February 13, 1800; Agnes, born August 13, 1801; Martha, born June 20, 1803; David born February 21, 1805; Robert born August 17, 1807; Benjamin, August 4, 1809; and Margaret, July 11, 1811.

William died August 5, 1849, and his wife, Martha, died June 8, 1839. Both are buried in the cemetery of Center Church, Fawn Township, York County, Pennsylvania. He was a farmer and is said to have been small of stature, while some of his sons were of unusual size.







Age 56

JAMES GEMMILL

1800-1857



CHAPTER VIII

JAMES  
and  
HANNAH STREET  
and  
ANN NORRIS

JAMES GEMMILL, my grandfather, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1800. He first married Hannah Street, and later married Ann Norris. From the first union were born William, Thomas, Martha and Sarah. From the second marriage were born: Robert, John, Wylie and Mary. Nearly all of James' life was spent upon the farm. He was a very large man, much of the time weighing over three hundred pounds. He was commonly known throughout the neighborhood as "Big Jimmy."

WILLIAM GEMMILL, eldest brother of James, had four children: John, who was a ranchman in California; Frank, who lived in Indiana and made a fortune in natural gas; Mary Jane, who married McCall Andrews; and Maggie, who married James Lowe who fought with McGregor at Gettysburg.

ROBERT GEMMILL, brother of James, had a son John G. Gemmill who still lives in Stewartsville, Pa.

BENJAMIN GEMMILL, the youngest brother of James, was born August 4, 1809. He had five children, William, Lou, Margaret, Ella and John B.



WILLIAM, the oldest son, went to South Dakota in an early day and had an eye shot out in a scrimmage with the Indians. The last known of him he was in the State of Washington.

LOU married Joseph Anderson and lived at Stewartstown, Pa. She is now dead.

MARGARET married Philip Hammond and still lives at Stewartstown, Pa.

ELLA married John R. Stansburry and lived until her death upon the old home place at New Port, Pa.

JOHN BROWN GEMMILL, the youngest son of Benjamin, was born in 1837 and died in 1914.

He was a farmer and merchant and served four years in the Pennsylvania Legislature.

He had four children:

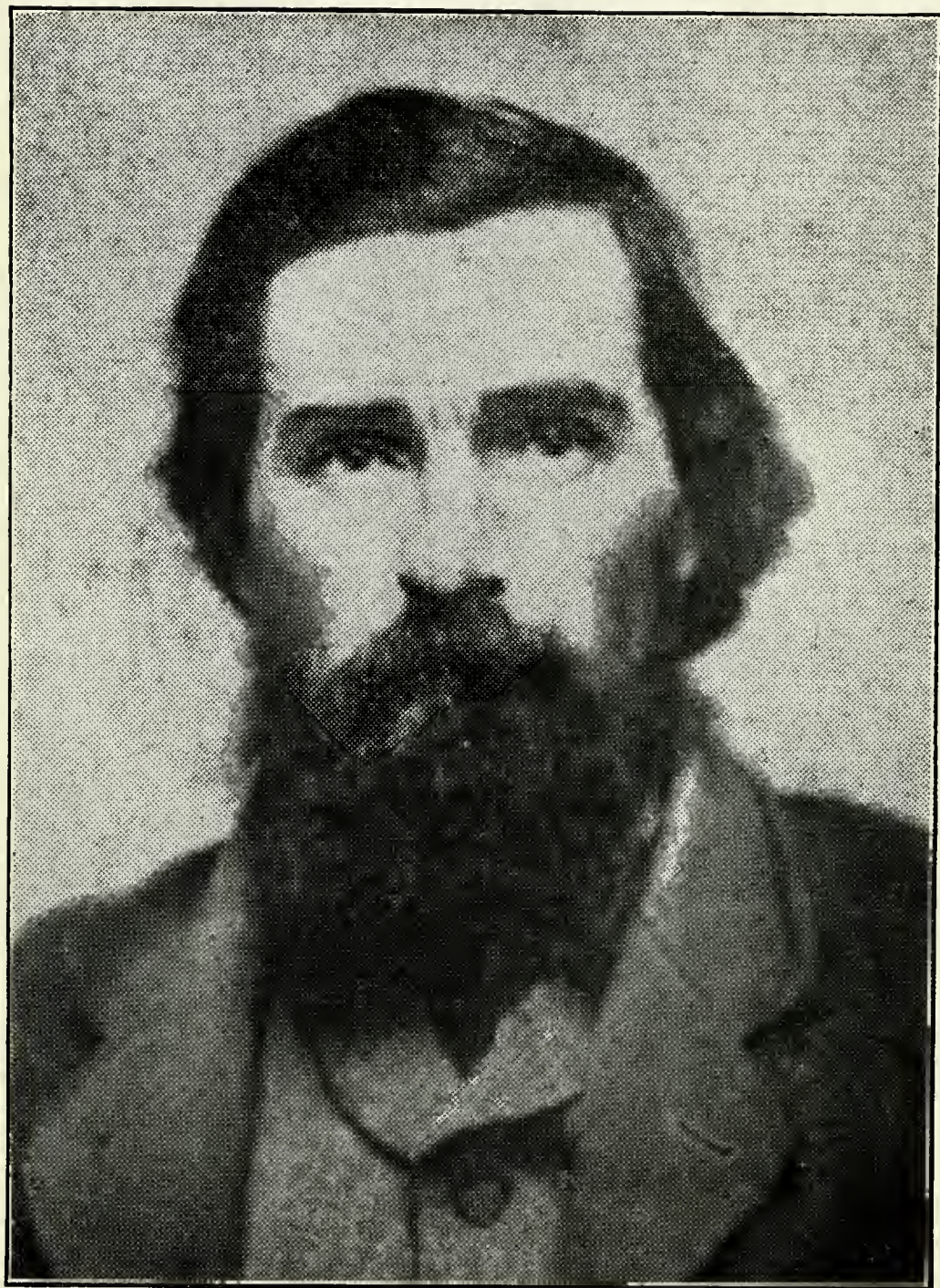
MILTON CRAWFORD GEMMILL who was born in 1862 and now lives in Baltimore, Md. He is married, is a traveling salesman and has four children.

WILLIAM BRUCE GEMMILL, born in 1864. He is a lawyer in York, Pa., and was for a time District Attorney of York County.

BENJAMIN McKEE GEMMILL, born in 1866. He is a Presbyterian minister living at Ivyland, Pa. He has five children.

ELLIS HALDANE GEMMILL, born September 30, 1868. He is married and lives in Chicago, Ill., and is employed as manager for the Dryden Rubber Co. He has one son Ellis Hughes Gemmill who is now a Freshman in the College of Engineering of Northwestern University.





Age 42

WILLIAM GEMMILL

1826-1904



## CHAPTER IX

### WILLIAM GEMMILL

### AND

### SUSAN A. GEMMILL

WILLIAM GEMMILL, my father, was born in Chamsford, York County, Pennsylvania, September 18, 1826. He was educated in the common schools and in an academy at York. He worked on a farm in his boyhood and when grown to young manhood taught school in the winter. In 1849, he was chosen principal of the Wrightsville York County Public Schools. It was here he met Susan A. Brenner, and they were married December 24, 1850. The next two years he taught school in the winter and worked on a farm in the summer. In 1851, he made an extended trip into Massachusetts, working in the harvest fields as an expert grain cradler. Their first child, James, was born in the spring of 1852, and a few weeks thereafter, the family started for the unknown West. The only available transportation at that time, was by boat down the Ohio, and up the Mississippi Rivers. So they journeyed. The trip was long and wearisome. Baby James fell ill on the way, and this added to their distress. They left the boat at Savanna, Illinois, and made their way, with difficulty, to Freeport, where shortly thereafter James grew worse and died. Work was obtained grading the right of way of the Illinois Central Railroad which was then being constructed between Rockford and Freeport. Soon, however, the family moved to a farm south of Freeport, and a few years later to a farm near Shannan, Illinois, upon which the family lived for over forty years. For many years he had held the office of school trustee and township assessor.



My father was a small man, seldom, if ever, weighing over one hundred and forty pounds. This may be, in part, accounted for by a serious injury which he sustained to his spine when a young man. All of his sons have at some time during their lives weighed over two hundred pounds. His habits were unusually abstemious. His early religious training was in the Presbyterian church, but when he moved West he joined the Methodist church, and remained a member, and trustee of that church until his death. I think no man was ever more scrupulously honest than he. He would yield a just claim of his own, rather than dispute it with another. He seldom laid down a rule of conduct for his children to follow. I do not remember that he ever told us not to do any of the things which are commonly regarded as immoral, but no one misunderstood his wish. He was at times nervous and petulant, due to physical ailments, but he never meant to be unjust. He always enjoyed the full confidence of the community, which for twenty-five years annually chose him to fix the values of all its assessable property for purposes of taxation. He died in Shannon, Illinois, November 24, 1904, and is buried in the Dunkard Cemetery located within the village.



SUSAN A. GEMMILL  
Age 80





SUSAN A. GEMMILL, my mother, was born September 13, 1829, in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania. Her father was Adam Brenner. He was of the fourth generation of Brenners in America. In September, 1737, John Deitrich Brenner, a native of Switzerland, sailed from Rotterdam on the good ship "Charming Nancy," and landed in Philadelphia on October 8, 1737. He was one of the first of a band of exiles who fled his native land to escape religious persecution. He was followed to America a few years later by other members of his family, among them Simeon, Hans, George and Adam, all of whom arrived from Switzerland on the ship Beulah in 1752, and Daniel Brenner who arrived in Philadelphia from Switzerland in 1753. In 1740, John Deitrich Brenner moved into Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and some members of the family have lived in that county ever since.



Susan Brenner was married to William Gemmill at Wrightsville, December 24, 1850, and came with him to Illinois in 1852. The family first lived in Freeport and a little later moved upon a farm two miles south of town. The third year after their arrival they moved twelve miles southwest of Freeport upon the prairie. Here they bought a farm. At that time the prairie extended from the farm in broad expanse, in every direction and was only broken, here and there, by the cottages of a few early settlers. It was upon this farm that twelve children were born, and most of their early lives spent.

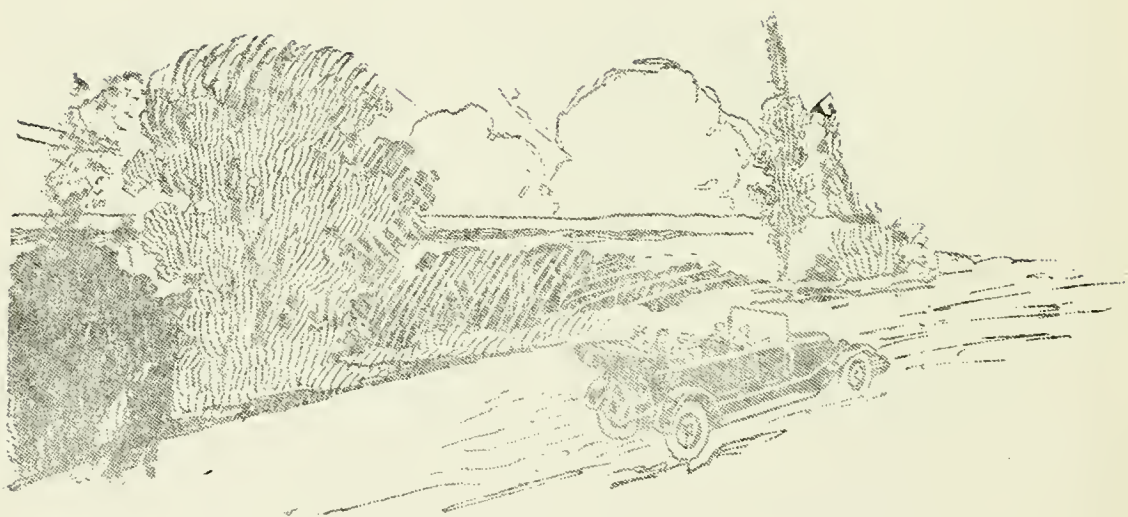
In addition to the usual household cares, mother performed a thousand other tasks, which in those days fell to the lot of the wife of a pioneer. The cows were to be milked twice a day, the calves to be fed, the milk to be strained, the cream to be skimmed, the butter to be churned, the chickens to be fed and the eggs to be gathered. This was the work of the woman, and all of it and much more fell daily to her lot. To the ordinary woman, this, with the care of nine or ten children, would seem to have been sufficient, but not so for her. When her sister-in-law, Sarah, died in 1863, leaving two little boys, they were introduced into our



home and became a part of our family; and when a few years later, her sister Ann died, leaving two baby girls, they were installed for a time with the rest of us, receiving the same care. Still another little orphan girl was taken into our home, where she remained until grown to womanhood.

The story of such a life can never be written. For it never occurred to her to keep a record of the long, terrible nights, when the lightning flashed, the thunder roared and the prairie was storm swept, and she with several small children waited in terror for the approach of day, or of those days and nights of trembling, anxious waiting at the bedside of a sick and sometimes dying babe, when no doctor was near, and all friends were far away. Nor has any record been kept of her ten thousand self-denials, that the children might be fed and clothed and schooled. Like her ancient fathers, her religion is her strongest motive power. Her service to the church is her constant joy. Even now at eighty-seven, she sews and quilts, and quilts and sews the long day through, that the church's needs may be supplied. Her thoughts are always with the preacher, the village church, and those who worship there. Nothing in the changing of the years has shaken her faith or warped her judgment.

To this marriage of William and Susan there were born fourteen children: James, Calvin W., Emma J., Laura, Ida, Howard S., William N., Carrie I., Etta A., Harvey, Leulla M., John A., Susan and Harry E. Of this number, James, Laura, Ida, Harvey and Susan died in infancy.





## CHAPTER X

My uncle, THOMAS S. GEMMILL, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, January 21, 1830, and died in Freeport, Illinois, May 6, 1910. He was first married May 10, 1860, to Rachael Elizabeth Gailey, and they moved to Freeport, Illinois, the same year. They had one child Laura who was born May 28, 1861. She is now married to Herbert Drake and lives in Los Angeles, California. Mrs. Gemmill died in Freeport, November 10, 1861. Thomas was married to Margaret Beard, October 7, 1869. She still lives at Freeport, Illinois. To the second marriage two children were born, Charles, who died at an early age, and Elizabeth who was born August 1, 1877, and who now lives with her mother in Freeport. Thomas served as assistant Postmaster of Freeport, for over forty years. Much of that time having almost exclusive charge of the office. He was a staunch member and active worker in the Presbyterian church.

My aunt, MARTHA GEMMILL, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, February 10, 1832. When a young woman she moved to Illinois and lived for many years in our family. She was married to Alfred Parkhurst, who died several years ago. They had several children, all of whom died in infancy. Martha still lives in Rockton, Illinois.

My aunt, SARAH GEMMILL, was born in November, 1833, in York County, Pennsylvania. She early moved to Illinois and was married to William D. Gemmill, a second cousin. She died February 11, 1863. They had two children, Wesley, born November 4, 1857. He is married and has eight children and four grandchildren. He lives at Windsor, Pennsylvania, where he is Principal of the Schools. Lincoln, is married and lives in Savonburg, Kansas. He is a farmer and has five children. William D. Gemmill was a soldier in the Rebellion and fought with Grant at Champion Hill and Shiloh.

My uncle, ROBERT S. GEMMILL, was born in York County, in 1840. He was married September 5, 1861, to Margaret I. Andrews. They had nine children, Franklin, Porter Gemmill, now game warden of Pennsylvania; James N. Gemmill, now principal of the Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, public schools; Robert A. Gemmill, farmer, Austin, Minnesota; Mary L., married to Ellsworth Homer of York, Pennsylvania; Hugh L. Gemmill, machinist, York, Pennsylvania; William W. Gemmill, now deceased (left wife and five children); Anna P., married Robert Gerber, machinist, York, Pennsylvania; Flora L. Gemmill (now deceased) was a trained nurse in Maryland, Southern Homeopathic Hospital.

My uncle, JOSEPH WILEY GEMMILL, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, in 1842, and married Emma Good in 1871. They had five children—Lottie, who married K. E. Beard of Brogueville, Pennsylvania; Lattimer C., who is now a retired farmer of Brogueville, Pennsylvania; Sallie, who married Chester Saylor of Felton, Pennsylvania; May, who married Roy Chubb, and lives in York, Pennsylvania; William W., who now lives on the old family homestead at Brogueville, Pennsylvania.

My uncle, JOHN V. GEMMILL, was born in York County, Pennsylvania, in 1843, and was twice married, first to Alice Murphy, in 1868. They had three children—John R. Gemmill, who graduated from Johns Hopkins University, and is now associated with a bonding house in Denver, Colorado; William Wiley Gemmill, a merchant in Sunnyburn, York County, Pennsylvania; Bertha, now single, lives with her brother, William Wiley. His second marriage was to Mary Gordon in 1881. From this marriage five children were born. They are now scattered over the West.

My aunt, MARY JANE GEMMILL, was born in 1844, and was married in 1861 to Hugh L. Andrews. They had six children, Robert G., merchant, York, Pennsylvania; John H., tobaccoist, Baltimore, Md.; William W., deceased; Laura, deceased; Minnie married, lives in Washington, D. C.; Anna, Insane Asylum, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

All of my uncles and aunts on my father's side are now dead except Martha.



EDNA E. GEMMILL



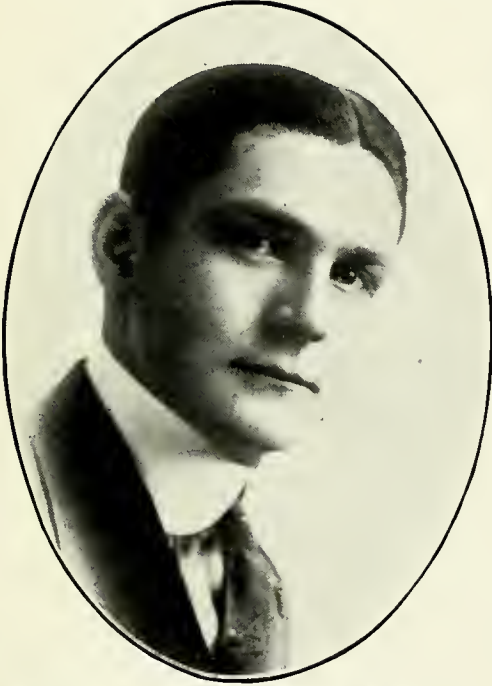
CHAPTER XI  
WILLIAM N. GEMMILL  
and  
EDNA E. GEMMILL

The writer, WILLIAM N. GEMMILL, was born on the home farm near Shannon, December 29, 1860. I attended the public schools, the high school of Shannon, and Cornell College, from which I graduated in 1886. After graduation I was principal of the public schools of Rockford, Iowa, and later superintendent of the public schools of Marion, Iowa. In 1891, I entered Northwestern University Law School, from which I graduated in 1892, and was admitted to the Bar. I practiced law in Chicago until 1906, when I was elected Judge of the Municipal Court, and re-elected to the same position in 1912, and still hold that office. In 1912, I received the degree of Doctor of Laws from the Chicago Law School, and in 1916, I received the same degree from Cornell College. I was married December 28, 1893, to Edna E. Billings of Rockford, Iowa. We have two children, Jeanette, born April 7, 1895, and graduated from Northwestern University in 1916; she now lives at home. William B., born April 20, 1898, and now a sophomore in the University of Chicago.



EDNA ESTELLE BILLINGS, was born in Rockford, Iowa, March 13, 1873. Her father is Edward Billings, who was born November 3, 1847, in Lancaster, Massachusetts. He comes from a long line of New England ancestry, dating back to the Revolution. In 1868, he moved to Iowa, where he engaged for a time in farming, and later entered the banking business, from which he retired a few years ago. He now lives in Chicago. Her mother, before her marriage, was Augusta A. Davis. She was born November 9, 1848, in St. Albans, Maine. Her grandfather was a soldier in the War of 1812. Mrs. Gemmill was a pupil in the Rockford High School from 1886 to 1889, while I was principal of the school. In 1889, she entered Cornell College, from which she graduated in 1893, with the degree of A. B. We were married December 28, 1893.





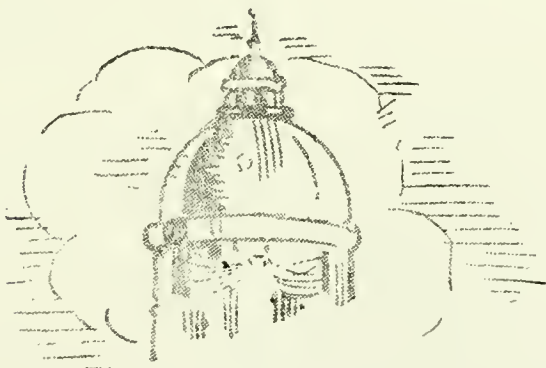
WILLIAM BILLINGS GEMMILL



JEANETTE BILLINGS GEMMILL



CALVIN WYLIE GEMMILL was born June 4, 1853, in Freeport Illinois. He was educated in the country schools, the high school of Shannon, Mt. Morris Seminary and the Illinois State Normal School at Bloomington. He moved to Canton, South Dakota, in the eighties and has resided there ever since. He is married and has two children, Ruth who lives in Washington, D. C., and John who is agent for the Pennsylvania Rubber Company in Chicago, Illinois. During his entire residence in Dakota, he has been engaged in the grain and stock business. For several years he was President of the Board of Education of Canton, and for one term was a member of the State Senate of South Dakota.



EMMA JANE GEMMILL was born September 15, 1855, upon the home farm near Shannon. After attending the public school, she spent some time at Mt. Morris Seminary, and later was married to Andrew S. Dodds. They lived in Rock Valley, Iowa, for a number of years, and afterward moved to Pipestone, Minnesota, where they lived until her death, in 1915. They had three children, Mabell, who is married to Ole Stansvad and lives at Renville, Minnesota; Ray, who is married and lives at Aberdeen, South Dakota; and Stella, who is single and lives at Minot, North Dakota.

HOWARD S. GEMMILL was born upon the home farm on June 11, 1859. He attended the country school, the high school at Shannon, and Cornell College, from which he graduated in 1886. Thereafter he was superintendent of the public schools of Sac City and Emmetsburg, Iowa. In 1894, he graduated from the Law Department of Northwestern University and was admitted to the Bar of Illinois. He was married to Nellie Pierson and they lived together at Wilmette, Illinois, until her death in 1915. He has two children, Glenn Gemmill, who is married and is in the automobile business at Wheeling, Illinois, and Helen, who recently graduated from Northwestern University, and now lives with her father at Wilmette. He was City Magistrate of his home town of Wilmette for several years, and is now a practicing attorney in Chicago.

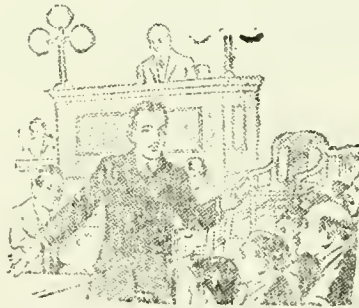
CARRIE I. GEMMILL was born December 19, 1862. She attended the public schools, the Shannon High School and Cornell College. She is married to Henry Osborn, and lives in Shannon, Illinois. They have one child, Don Osborn, who is married and lives at Shannon.

ETTA A. GEMMILL was born February 1, 1866. She attended the public schools, the high school of Shannon, and Cornell College. She was married to Henry Hubbard, who for twenty-four years has been County Clerk of Rock Island County, Illinois. They live in Rock Island and have three children, Clifford, who recently graduated from the Law Department of Northwestern University, and is a practicing attorney at Rock Island; Lois, who is married to Leonard Neighbour and lives in Moline, Illinois; and Marion, who lives with her parents in Rock Island.

LUELLA M. GEMMILL was born June 28, 1867. She attended the public schools, the high school of Shannon and Cornell College. After teaching school for some time, she was married to Pitney Atkins, and they now live in Freeport, Illinois. They have two children, Eda, who lives at home, and Milo, who is now a student in the University of Illinois.

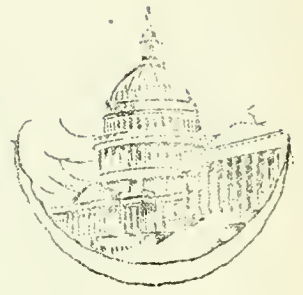
JOHN A. GEMMILL was born on the farm April 14, 1869. He attended the public schools and Dixon College. He is married and lives at Racine, Wisconsin, where he is engaged in the insurance business. He has no children.

HARRY E. GEMMILL was born February 19, 1872, and has always lived near the old homestead at Shannon. He attended the public schools and high school of Shannon. For many years he lived on the home farm, and is now in the farm implement business in Shannon. He holds the office of Township Assessor, which his father held for so many years. He is married and has one child, Lois, who lives at home.









## CHAPTER XII

### FENWICK AND ITS ENVJRONS TODAY

In order to know something of the country from which our forefathers came, I have decided to publish here excerpts from two letters recently received from Glasgow. The first one is by Mr. J. Leiper Gemmill of Dumbreck, dated November 25, 1916: It is as follows:

“Dear Judge Gemmill:—

You ask about Fenwick and Kilmarnock. Kilmarnock is about ten miles from the sea and is a busy country town of about 34,000 inhabitants, with a varied set of industries, engineering works, woolen and lace mills, etc. Its history dates to the beginning of Scottish history and it has always been an important town. Every town in Scotland has its parish and Kilmarnock parish was a very large one and originally included Fenwick district, but about 1600 Fenwick was formed into a separate parish with a church and school and parish government of its own.



Fenwick Village is about three and one-half miles northeast of Kilmarnock and lies just where the rich agricultural land running up from the coast line joins on to the higher ground and moorland. The western half of the parish is composed of small rich dairy farms of 100 to 160 acres or so, highly cultivated, while the eastern half is mainly sheep farms, benty ground and moorland, with great stretches of mossliags and bog. The kind of place for the rearing of hardy men and women with strong frames and independent spirits; among the hills and upland districts in Scotland the men are mostly taller than those of the richer ground round the coasts, and in the Fenwick district it was the same, the men being mostly tall and strong, with light brown hair and ruddy complexion.

I feel very sure that Fenwick was the main original home of the Gemmills in Scotland, and that the bearers of the name at Dunlop, Irvine, Glasgow or elsewhere were offshoots. When there are three or four sons in a family some of them usually branch out and seek their fortunes in commerce or one of the professions. It was natural that some of them should find their way to Irvine, which was only ten miles off and a thriving seaport, or to Glasgow, twenty-two miles off with all the attractions of a city, and later on others would find their way to Edinburgh and London. Two examples occur to me in the time of the poet Burns. A young lad Shaw, the son of a small farmer near Kilmarnock became Sir James Shaw, Lord Mayor of London, and a kind friend of the poet's family. Then "Bonnie Jean" Armour, the wife of the poet was the daughter of a stone mason at Mauchline, Ayreshire. Her brother, Robert Armour, found his way to London and died a wealthy merchant there. There are still about ten families of Gemmills in the Fenwick district, farmers and merchants, etc., in a comfortable position in life, but I don't know that any of them still hold the original properties that belonged to their forefathers. Most of them have been sold and in

others the land came to belong to daughters who married, and so the name changed. One of the largest Fenwick Gemmill owners had an only child, who married a Mr. M. Knight, from Irvine. They went to Edinburgh, and their line becoming extinct, their properties at Fenwick were all sold some years ago. The same has taken place all over Scotland with the mass of properties belonging to the middle classes. It is only in the case of great entailed estates now that few changes in ownership take place.

After all, while Fenwick was an ideal district for hardy youths to be reared in, it was a quiet rural place with few outlets, and it was not unnatural that many of its sons should seek wider fields for their ambition.

In the neighboring parish of Dunlop there is, however, one small farm called Templehouse that has from 1500 or thereabouts right down to the present been owned and occupied by the same family of Gemmills. It is an isolated small farm, and the original owner of it would in all probability be of the Fenwick Gemmills. A Mr. John Alexander Gemmill, Barrister, Ottawa, was of the Templehouse family. He was a very able and successful gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to me when on two occasions he came over to Scotland, to go round the old places where the name is familiar. He lived at Cliffside, Ottawa, but died in 1905, and I rather think his widow lives in Winnipeg.

You ask about distinguished Gemmills. None of them seem to have risen to great heights, but on the other hand, so far as I can trace, none of them have sunk very deep, originally mostly comfortable farmers and small lairds. There have been many merchants, lawyers, bankers, clergymen, coal masters, civil engineers and doctors. One of the best known was the late Professor Samson Gemmill, M. D., of Glasgow University. He died three years ago, and was widely known and respected. Another well known name is my younger brother, Dr. James F. Gemmill, lecturer on embryology at Glasgow University, and of Zoology at Glasgow Train-

ing College, a keen research worker who is devoting his life work wholly to science. Then a few years ago a Gemmill was Provost of Kilmarnock. A hundred years ago there was only one Gemmill in the Glasgow Directory. Now there are fifty. This just indicates how the bearers of the name have increased and spread and come sufficiently to the front to be reckoned with.

When I was last in Liverpool and London, I happened to meet several in very good positions there, who originally came from Ayreshire.

Yours very truly,

J. LEIPER GEMMILL."



The second letter is from William Gemmell, an eminent physician and surgeon of Scotstounhill, Glasgow, and a Fellow of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts and Antiquities.

His Honour

Judge William N. Gemmill,  
Chicago.

Dear Sir:—

I have been in London for the past fortnight, and on my return find a letter from Dr. James F. Gemmill, saying he has had an enquiry from you regarding some Kilmarnock Gemmills of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Though one or two individuals of the name rose to eminence, there never was a clan Gemmill, nor a chief of a clan, nor a properly constituted legal coat-of-arms (though there were a number of bastard coats-of-arms—a feature still common in Scotland, I am sorry to say). In fact the Gemmills were, as a rule, agriculturists who went on tilling the ground and breeding families, at both of which they displayed considerable ability. Hardly ever do we find their names among the soldiers: theirs the arts of peace. Sporadically a few become members of the professions, and some did well in these, others, not so well. There was a strong religious strain among the name in Scotland, and being strongest in Ayrshire, the centre of the Covenanters of the days of Charles II and James II, some have perished by the sword for their religious convictions. There are Gemmills now in Kilmarnock, one of whom, a thriving jobmaster, was provost of Ayr a few years ago.

Sincerely and Faithfully,

WILLIAM GEMMELL."



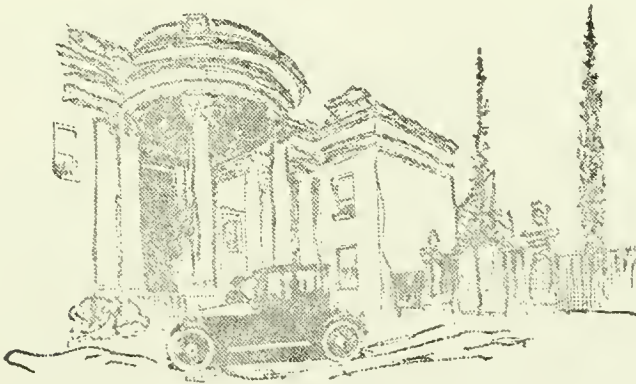


## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GEMMILLS IN CANADA

From an early day there were Gemmills who settled in Canada. While there is no doubt that these belong to the same parent stock, yet most of them trace their ancestry back to the Gemmills of Tempelhouse in the Parish of Dunlop, not far from Glasgow. The parishes of Kilmarnock and Dunlop are both in Ayreshire. The Gemmills of Templehouse trace an unbroken line of descent from 1500 down to the present day. Prior to that time, there is evidence that at times persons bearing some form of the name Gemmill occupied the same lands.

According to a record, dated 1264, one of these Gemmills was made a knight, and a town and a parish were named after him. The town was called "Gemilstown." Robertson, the historian,



says in his works, Volume 37, page 336, "The name Gemmill is pretty general in this part of the country. Several of that name have at different times been ranked among the land proprietors and free holders, while others have attained to great opulence or have been connected by intermarriage with some of the principal families of the country.

I will not attempt to follow this branch of the family through the two or three centuries intervening, but mention only a few families. There was a certain Patrick Gemmill who seems to have been a man of more than usual wealth and prominence. The record shows that he owned many lands, made many loans and took many pieces of property as security. On the night of November 4, 1570, three men entered his house and robbed him. They were arrested, tried and hanged. A part of the charge against them is as follows:

Three men, under silence and cloud of night, climbed to Patrick Gemmill's dwelling house in Templehouse, when he and his wife and family was in a sober and quiet manner taking the night's rest, and there brak up the door and entered therein and took the said Patrick and his wife furth of their beds, bound his wife and cast her into a nickel kist. Menaced the said Patrick to deliver to them his silver and gold and because he refused to do the same they bound a tether round his neck and hung him up upon a balk, where he hung a long time until he was cut down, alive," etc.

After this Patrick there seems to have been many succeeding Patrick Gemmills in Ayrshire. It soon came about, however, that the names of John, William, Robert, Thomas, Margaret, Jannett, Agnes and Mary, were the most favored names with the Gemmills.

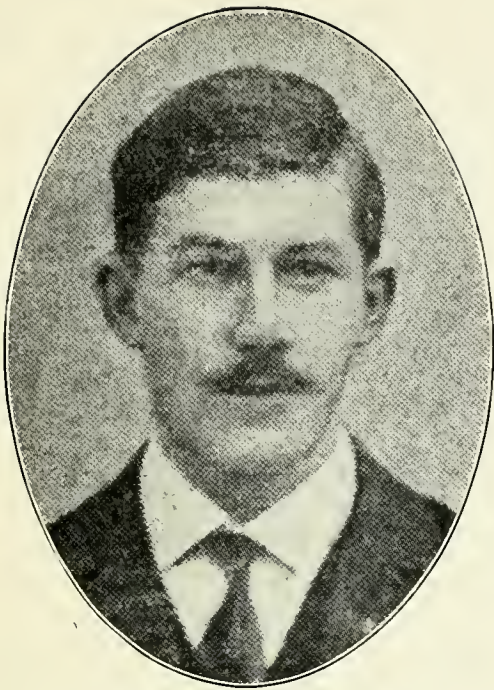
Among these were two brothers, William and Thomas, who in 1826 were muslin manufacturers in Glasgow under the firm name of Gemmill & Company. They prospered greatly and soon thereafter branched out as general commission agents with branch houses in Valparaiso, Chile, Lima, Peru, Canton and Hongkong, China, and Manila, P. I. They amassed great wealth.

One of the early settlers in Canada was John Gemmill, who

sailed from Scotland in 1821, and landed in Quebec. He was six feet, four inches in height. He journeyed by way of the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, and when the boat capsized it was found that five passengers were named John Gemmill, one of them was his son John Alexander Gemmill, who in later years was a merchant in Carleton Place, and was a writer of considerable prominence. This John Alexander Gemmill likewise had a son named John Alexander Gemmill. This son was born at Carleton Place, March 10, 1846. He was educated at the Grange Sunderland, and at the University of Glasgow. He was admitted to the Bar of Ontario in 1871, and at once took a prominent place. He was a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and President of the Great North West Central Railway Company. He was prominent in philanthropic work, and was President of St. Andrew Society of Ottawa. He wrote a book upon the subject of Parliamentary Divorces in Canada. He was married to Emily Helen Ogilvie, whose father is mentioned by Burke as belonging to the gentry of Scotland. John Alexander Gemmill died in 1905, and his widow now lives with her two sons in Winnipeg, Canada, while her other two sons are fighting for their country in France.







CORPORAL CUTHBERT GEMMILL  
 Manchline, Scotland  
 Captured by the Germans



2ND LIEUT. ALEXANDER GEMMILL  
 Scottish Rifles  
 Eldest son of  
 William Gemmill  
 Solicitor, Glasgow, Scotland  
 On service in India



TROOPER PATRICK GEMMILL  
 Winnipeg, Canada  
 Recently wounded in France



CAPT. JAMES DUNLOP GEMMILL  
 of Royal Engineers  
 Winnipeg, Canada



## CHAPTER XIII

# THE GEMMILLS IN THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR

It must be of interest to those who bear the name of Gemmill to know that many of their kinsfolk, either have been, or are now actively engaged in the greatest of all world conflicts.

I am not able to present the complete Roll of Honor, and I will only mention here a few names of men whose enlistments and achievements have come to my knowledge.

First among these is **SECOND LIEUTENANT JOHN A. GEMMILL** of the Sixteenth Highland Light Infantry, who was killed while gallantly leading his men into action on July 1, 1916, in the first great drive on the Somme. He was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Leiper Gemmill of Dumbreck, Glasgow, Scotland. His commanding officer, in writing from the battle front to Mr. J. Leiper Gemmill, on July 5, 1916, said:

“Dear Mr. Gemmill:

We have come through very hard fighting in what the French call the Battle of Picardie. I fancy it will be known by the same name, although sometimes I hear it referred to as the Battle of the Somme. Our Battalion had assigned to it a most important role in the leading attack and naturally suffered a good deal, as we were up against Germany's best troops.

Your boy, Second Lieut. John A. Gemmill, was last seen urging on his platoon when those in front had fallen. It was a situation which might have unnerved



any one as the fire was terrific, but with one hand in his trouser pocket and with a switch in the other, he was seen urging on his men to close with the enemy. His last words, I understand, were: 'Come on the good old 16th. Come on the good old H. L. I.' He then fell mortally wounded.

No better soldier ever wore His Majesty's uniform. Had he been my own son I could not have loved him more. Quiet, unassuming, thorough, adored by his men and beloved by his superiors, he made the great sacrifice for his King and Country without flinching, and has shed a halo around his name which cannot perish. I cannot express myself in words. I would rather congratulate you on being the father of such a boy. If God had given me such a son I would have been the proudest man living."

**STEWART ARMOUR GEMMILL** was Captain of the Sixth Battalion Highland Light Infantry. He was the fourth and youngest son of John and Elizabeth Gemmill of 27 Atholl Gardens, Glasgow, Scotland. He was educated at the Glasgow Academy and had become an expert analytical chemist. A short time after he left school he was sent to India to work as an analytical chemist in the gold mines there. When the war broke out he at once returned to London to join his regiment. On his arrival he found that he had been excused from services at the front with his regiment, on the ground that his services at the mines were of such a character that he could not be spared. He, however, was unwilling to be excused, and at his urgent request was permitted to rejoin his regiment, and in May, 1915, proceeded with it to Gallipoli. Shortly after his arrival there he was chosen to lead his battalion in the famous charge of the 12th of July on Achi Baba Mullah. In this charge he was mortally wounded and was taken to the general hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, where he died on July 22, 1915. He is now buried in a military cemetery at that place. For this gallant charge he and his brave followers were highly complimented by the Commanding Officer, Sir Ian Hamilton.





LIEUTENANT JOHN A. GEMMILL  
Glasgow, Scotland  
Eldest son of  
J. Leiper Gemmill  
Killed in action, July 1, 1916



2ND LIEUT. CUTIBERT GEMMILL  
of 1st Gordon Highlanders  
Second son of  
J. Leiper Gemmill  
Solicitor, Glasgow, Scotland  
Fighting in France



NEIL A. GEMMILL  
Age 15  
Officers Training Corps  
Third and youngest son of  
J. Leiper Gemmill  
Glasgow, Scotland





JOHN GEMMILL, the third son of John and Elizabeth Gemmill, and a brother of Stewart Armour Gemmill, joined the Glasgow Highlanders at the outbreak of the war. In a short time he was made lieutenant of the Sixth Highland Light Infantry, but was soon thereafter raised to the rank of Captain in the Twelfth Battalion Highland Infantry, and with his regiment was sent to France in June, 1915. On September 25, 1915, while gallantly leading his Company into action at the battle of Loos, he was instantly killed by shell fire. His body now lies buried in France.

These two brothers, John and Stewart, were grandsons of Hugh Gemmill, who recently died in Kilmarnock. In his lifetime he owned the old farm of Todd Hill in Fenwick, which has been occupied by his forefathers for over two hundred years.

CUTHBERT GEMMILL, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cuthbert Gemmill of Mauchline, Scotland, was a corporal at the age of twenty in the Highland Scotch Regiment, but he is now a prisoner in Germany. When last seen by his comrades he was rallying his men forward to the front line trenches of the Germans, at a place called Highwood.

CUTHBERT GEMMMILL, the second son of J. Leiper Gemmill of Glasgow, and brother of the late Captain John A. Gemmill, is now a second lieutenant of the first battalion of the famous Gordon Highlanders, and is fighting somewhere in France.

JAMES DUNLOP GEMMILL is Captain of the Seventh Field Company of the Royal Engineers of the British expeditionary force. He was born in Ottawa, Canada, December 14, 1885. His father was John Alexander Gemmill, a prominent barrister of Ottawa, and a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. His mother, Emily Helen Gemmill, is now a widow living at Armstrong Point, Winnipeg, Canada. Before her marriage she was Emily Helen Ogilvie, the daughter of one of the oldest and most prominent families of Montreal. Captain James Gemmill graduated from the Royal University College of Kingston, in 1906, with the highest honors, receiving the Governor-General's gold medal, and thereby winning his commission in the Royal Engineers. Immediately following his graduation, he

spent two years in the School of Military Engineering in Chathan, England, and from there was sent for five years to Gibraltar. From thence he was sent for six months to Calais, France, and it was while serving here that he was called to the front as Captain, commanding the Seventh Field .Company, which has recently been highly praised by Sir Douglas Haig.

PATRICK GEMMILL, the younger brother of Captain James Dunlop Gemmill, enlisted as a trooper at the age of nineteen in the Fort Horse, and went over the seas with the first contingent in September, 1914. He spent the first winter of the war on Salisbury Plains where he endured great hardships. In the



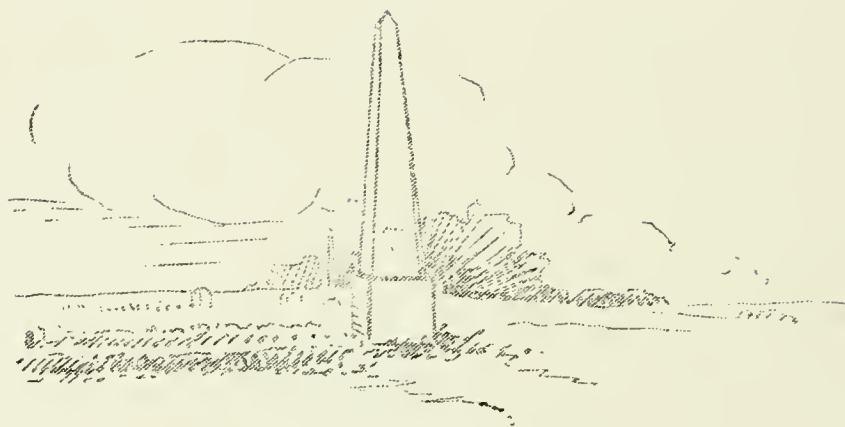


spring he was transferred to Lord Strathcona's Horse and went to France where, on May 24, in a sharp battle, he was severely wounded. For nineteen hours after receiving his wounds he lay unattended in the trench, tormented by thirst and expecting each moment to be his last. During this whole period he was under continuous fire from the enemy's guns. At last, under cover of darkness, he was rescued and sent to England, where he lay for a month in the hospital at Norwich. On his recovery he received a commission in the artillery service and spent a year training Territorials in England. In July, 1916, he was again sent to the front, and from that time to this has been almost continually under fire. His superior officer writes of him: "He is doing splendid work for his country." The noble mother of these two gallant young soldiers now lives with her other two sons in Winnipeg, and in closing a letter written to me concerning her sons at the front, under date December 11, 1916, she signs herself: "Yours sincerely, E. H. Gemmil, the *proud mother*."

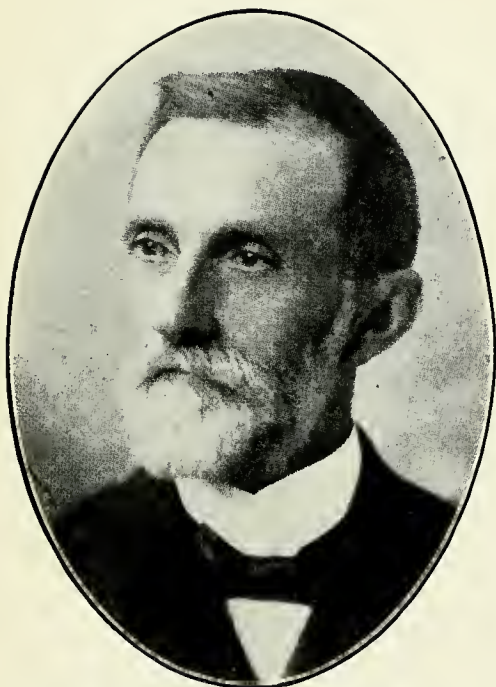
WILFRID GEMMILL of Chatham, Ontario, enlisted in the Drury Medical Corps in January, 1918. He was at that time nineteen years old. He spent but nineteen days in England and was then hurried to the front in Belgium, where he was almost constantly under fire. He was later sent to France. Part of the time he was stationed at the base hospital, but most of the time he has been actively engaged at the front.

ARCHIBALD GEMMILL, a son of Peter Gemmill of Paisley, Scotland, is now with the great army somewhere in France. He has a brother, Peter Gemmill, now living in Chicago.

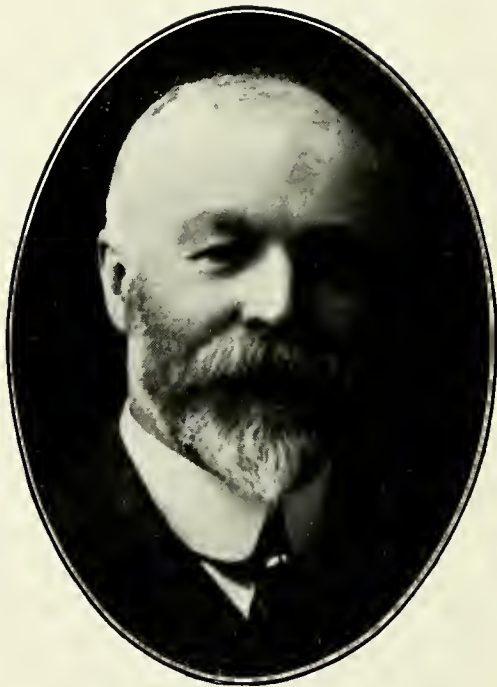








JOHN MCALLISTER GEMMILL  
Laurel, Pennsylvania



J. LEIPER GEMMILL  
Glasgow, Scotland



## CHAPTER XV

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In preparing this sketch of the Gemmill family, I am greatly indebted to many persons, without whose aid I could have accomplished but little. First among these is J. Leiper Gemmill of Dumbreck, Glasgow, Scotland. Mr. Gemmill is a distinguished writer (lawyer) of Glasgow. His forefathers were proprietors of land in Fenwick, and his family runs straight back to John Gemmill who lived through the troublous times of Mary Queen of Scots, and died in 1578, bequeathing his sword to his son. The Gemmills were devoted Covenanters, and the most treasured possession of Mr. Gemmill today is this old Covenanter sword of the family. He is a graduate of Glasgow University and was the founder of the National Burns Memorial Cottage Homes located at Mauchline, the home of the Scotch poet. He has served as burgess of Glasgow and is now a member of its Board of Education. He is an elder in the Church of Scotland and a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow. One of Mr. Gemmill's most famous cases was that wherein he represented Miss Anna B. Burns, granddaughter and nearest heir of the poet, Robert Burns, wherein she sought to set aside the sale of the original Burns manuscript and to have them turned over to the government of Scotland. In 1909, Mr. Gemmill wrote a book upon the Gemmills of Scotland. From this book I have copied much. In addition, I have, through correspondence with him, learned much of those who bear the Gemmill name in Scotland, and of the noble young fellows who today are gallantly upholding the honor of the name upon the battle fields in Europe.

I am also greatly indebted to John McAllister Gemmill of Laurel, York County, Pennsylvania. He is a son of William

and Agnes McAllister Gemmill and was born on the farm where he now resides January 16, 1848. Some of his ancestors lived in his immediate neighborhood 170 years ago. On his father's side were the Leipers and Wallaces and on his mother's side the Proudfoots and McCallisters, all Scotch. From 1870 to 1872, he lived in Rock Island, Illinois, and later in Philadelphia. He was married in 1875 to Elizabeth Hamilton whose parents came to America from Lanarkshire, Scotland. He is a grandson of William Gemmill who was born August 4, 1774, and who is my great grandfather. A good many years ago John McAllister Gemmill wrote, in a history of York County, Pennsylvania, a sketch of the Gemmills in that State. From this sketch I have gleaned much. In addition, I have from time to time received valuable information from him concerning the early families in Pennsylvania, especially relating to their occupation, lands and burial places.

I desire also to record my indebtedness to William Gemmill of Scotstounhill, Glasgow, who has collected much data concerning the Gemmill genealogy, and who purposes to publish a book upon the subject in the near future. He is a prominent Doctor or Medicine and Surgery in Scotland, and a Fellow of the Scottish Royal Society of Arts and Antiquities.

I am likewise under deep obligation to Professor James N. Gemmill, now principal of the Glenn Rock, Pennsylvania Public Schools. Mr. Gemmill was for twelve years vice-principal of the Wrightsville Public Schools. He is the son of Robert Gemmill who was my father's half brother. In many letters he has told of our more immediate relatives whom we of the West have never known. He married Mary E. Beard, granddaughter of John E. Beard, the tanner of Lower Windsor Township. He has a daughter who graduated from the high school last June.

Nor can I overlook my debt to Mrs. Emily Helen Gemmill of Armstrong Point, Winnipeg, Canada. In spite of the distractions of the terrible war in which two of her sons are fighting, she has taken the time to write me on several occasions and

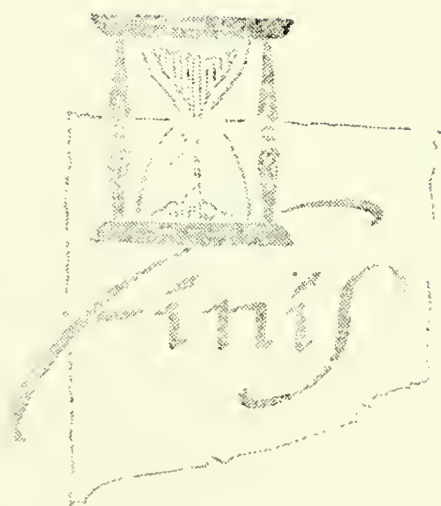
in addition has furnished me with a copy of a book on the Gemmill family written by her late husband. In writing of the Templehouse Gemmills, I have copied freely from this book.

My obligations would not be complete without mentioning the name of Miss Mary Gemmill of Chatham, Ontario, from whom I received Mr. J. Leiper Gemmill's book upon the early history of the Gemmills in Scotland. She has also given me an interesting account of three grandfather's clocks that were distributed among several members of the Gemmill family.

From various sources I have received accounts of some strange and wonderful grandfathers clocks that from generation to generation have been handed down to the bearers of the Gemmill name.









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